

**APPROVED**  
**JUNE 4, 2019**

Item #F-2  
June 4, 2019

**NEW OPERATING AND/OR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORITY  
FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

**Submitted for:** Action.

**Summary:** New independent institutions, institutions planning to operate at a new location, including a location outside the higher education region of original operating authority, and out-of-state institutions planning to operate in Illinois for the first time are required to obtain authorization to operate. These institutions also are required to obtain authorization for each new degree program.

**Action Requested:** That the Illinois Board of Higher Education approve the recommendations to grant degree-granting authority and/or operating authority to the following institution:

**Proprietary**

Worsham College of Mortuary Science

- Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science in the North Suburban Region

STATE OF ILLINOIS  
BOARD OF HIGHER EDUCATION

**NEW OPERATING AND/OR DEGREE-GRANTING AUTHORITY  
FOR INDEPENDENT INSTITUTIONS**

The Illinois Board of Higher Education (IBHE) has responsibility for administration of The Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005) and The Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010). Under these statutes, new independent institutions, institutions planning to operate at a new location, including a location outside the higher education region of original operating authority, and out-of-state institutions planning to operate in Illinois for the first time are required to obtain authorization to operate. These institutions also are required to obtain authorization for each new degree program.

Applications for new operating and degree-granting authority submitted by independent Illinois institutions and out-of-state institutions are reviewed by the staff. Recommendations are developed by applying criteria for operating and/or degree-granting authority, which are defined in the rules adopted for administration of the statutes and Board policies on assessment of student learning and specialized accreditation requirements for student licensure. These criteria encompass educational objectives, institution and degree titles, curricula, facilities, faculty and administrator qualifications, student policies, publications, records, compliance with pertinent laws, and fiscal stability. Staff recommendations are based on analyses of application materials, responses to questions, and site visits. Out-of-region sites are defined as sites located within an IBHE approval region other than the region within which an institution's original operating authority was granted. There are ten IBHE approval regions; each is coterminous with one or more community college districts. Approval to operate within a new approval region entitles an institution to operate throughout the region, and not solely at the site at which the institution initially applied.

This item includes recommendations to grant operating and/or degree-granting authority to one institution.

**Proprietary Executive Summary**

Worsham College of Mortuary Science

- Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science in the North Suburban Region

Worsham College of Mortuary Science requests authorization to offer an online-only Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science program to U.S. residents/students in the North Suburban Region. The program was designed to provide students with a curriculum meeting accreditation standards for preparation as funeral service professionals. Graduates of the program will have career opportunities in funeral services as funeral directors and embalmers. Worsham College of Mortuary Science is a single-purpose institution that has a 100-year history of graduating funeral service professionals. Worsham College of Mortuary Science gained approval by the Illinois Board of Higher Education to offer the Associate of Applied Science in Funeral Science and now proposes to offer a 63-hour Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science that incorporates foundational and general education courses. There are policies in place to ensure

faculty members possess the training, credentials, and qualifications to provide instruction in the proposed program. The Worsham College of Mortuary Science has sufficient library, technology, staff, and financial resources in place to support the proposed program.

Approval request summary, including staff conclusion, follows in Attachment A.

The staff recommends adoption of the following resolutions:

*The Illinois Board of Higher Education hereby grants to Worsham College of Mortuary Science authorization to grant an Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science in the North Suburban Region, subject to the institution's implementation and maintenance of the conditions that were presented in its application and that form the basis upon which this authorization is granted.*

**Worsham College of Mortuary Science**  
**495 Northgate Parkway**  
**Wheeling, IL 60090**  
**President: Mr. Karl Kann**

**Proposed Program Title in the Region of Authorization:** Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science in the North Suburban Region.

*Projected Enrollment:* The institution projects approximately 50 students in the first year, with approximately 60 students in subsequent years.

**Institutional Accreditation:** Worsham College of Mortuary Science is accredited by the American Board of Funeral Service Education.

### **Background and History**

Worsham College of Mortuary Science (Worsham or the College) is an independent for-profit institution dedicated to the education of accomplished funeral service professionals. Worsham College of Mortuary Science was founded by Albert Worsham on March 17, 1911, as the Worsham College of Embalming. After Mr. Worsham died, seven staff members, all physicians, purchased the College and changed its name to Worsham College of Mortuary Science. For the next 26 years, Worsham operated under the combined efforts of the new owners, all of whom instructed in various capacities. In 1961, attorneys Erwin Greenberg and James Spangler assumed the administrative duties of the College. They operated the College until 1979, when Bruno Bak, a faculty member since his graduation from Worsham in 1947, became president. Mr. Bak together with Joan Tomczak-Bak, who served in the capacity as Registrar since 1967, moved the College to Wheeling, Illinois, in the northern suburbs of Chicago. Presently, Karl Kann is the President, a graduate of Worsham College in 1990. The current chief academic officers are Brian and Leili McMurrough, both graduates of Simmons Institute of Funeral Service.

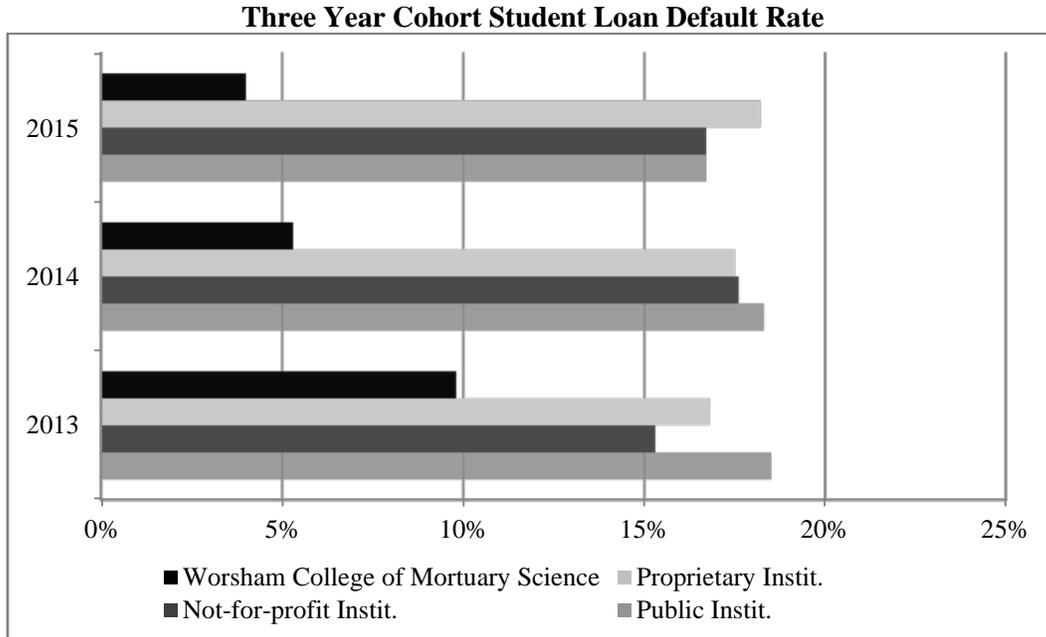
The institution currently offers the Associate of Applied Science (AAS) in Mortuary Science as an intensive one-year, in-person curriculum. With this application, the Worsham College of Mortuary Science seeks authorization to offer an online-only Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science in the North Suburban region. Students in locales outside of the U.S. will not be eligible for admission to this program.

### **Institutional Data**

*1030.30(a)(3)(F): Success in student progression and graduation across all existing approved programs, and success rates in programs preparing students for certification and licensure, shall be consistent with expectations in higher education and the appropriate related field of study. At a minimum, the Board shall consider the following factors, based on results for similar institutions: (i) Graduation rates, certificate and degree completion rates, retention rates, and pass rates for licensure and certification aligned with thresholds set by State or national regulatory bodies; and (ii) Success rate, which shall be, at a minimum, higher than that of the lowest quartile of these measures for similar Illinois institutions defined as open versus competitive enrollment institutions and primarily associate versus primarily baccalaureate granting institutions. Exceptions may be made to the lowest quartile if an institution is above the national average for these measures using the same comparison categories of institutions.*

This section includes information about institutional and student success measures for each institution seeking program approval. The institution’s rates will be compared to Illinois institutions from within a select comparison group and against the national standards or averages. For a proposed undergraduate program, this section will include undergraduate graduation rates, first- to-second year retention rates, student loan default rates, and any applicable licensure passage rates. For a proposed graduate program, this section will primarily focus on student loan default data since this measure also includes graduate students in the calculation.

Undergraduate-related data fields are not provided because the College does not offer programs to a cohort of first-time full time students.



*Source: National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education*  
*Note: Worsham College of Mortuary Science is a private for-profit institution. A lower number is a positive indicator.*

**Student Loan Default Rate**

The three-year student loan default rate for Worsham College of Mortuary Science was 4.0 percent in 2015, 5.3 percent in 2014, and 9.8 percent in 2013. The three-year cohort student loan default rate is the percentage of a school’s borrowers who enter repayment on certain Federal Family Education Loan Program or William D. Ford Federal Direct Loan Program loans during a particular federal fiscal year, October 1 to September 30, and default or meet other specified conditions prior to the end of the second following fiscal year. The U.S. Department of Education stated that the Fiscal Year 2015 three-year national cohort default rate was 10.8 percent. The Fiscal Year 2015 three-year national cohort average default rate breakdown by institutional sector for all institutions is: 10.3 percent for public institutions; 7.1 percent for not-for-profit institutions; and 15.6 percent for proprietary institutions.

## **Mission and Objectives**

*1030.60(a)(2): The objectives of the certificate or degree program must be consistent with what the degree program title implies.*

*1030.60(a)(3): The requested certificate or degree program shall be congruent with the purpose, goals, objectives and mission of the institution.*

The proposed program is consistent with the mission, goals, and objectives of Worsham College of Mortuary Science. The requested degree title of Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science reflects the degree program objectives and curriculum.

## **Curriculum/Assessment**

*1030.60(a)(4): The caliber and content of the curriculum shall assure that the stated certificate or degree objectives for which the program is offered will be achieved.*

### **Admission Requirements**

For the proposed Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science, applicants must submit a completed application, two letters of recommendation, a personal statement explaining why the student has selected funeral service as a profession, a personal statement explaining why the student is seeking to complete a degree online, and evidence that one of the following has been fulfilled: graduation in the upper 25 percent of the student's high school class or a GED; an acceptable level on the SAT (1000, combined) or ACT (20, composite); or a minimum of 75 percent on the entrance examination administered by the College.

To be considered for transfer, a student must submit an official transcript(s) obtained from a regionally accredited college demonstrating at least a 2.0 or C in the course(s) for up to 25 percent (or up to 16 semester credit hours). Transfer of funeral service-specific coursework requires program director approval and is not guaranteed. Worsham College of Mortuary Science does not grant transfer credit for advanced placement, experiential learning, or remedial or developmental courses.

### **Curriculum**

#### **Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science**

The Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science requires completion of 63 semester credit hours, including 25 hours of general education courses, 36 hours of core courses, and two hours of clinical practicum at an approved funeral service facility or at the Cook County Medical Examiner's Office, with which Worsham College has an 80-year practicum partnership. Students must submit their choices for funeral service clinical practica to the program director; Worsham faculty then conduct a site visit to ensure facility quality and safety standards, and to ensure the licensing and education of the funeral director. The clinical internships/practica require students to embalm at least 15 cases while being observed by a clinical preceptor, and conduct five conference arrangements, five funeral services, and five first calls, to be eligible for graduation. A professional review course that prepares students for the National Board Examination and assesses students for funeral service competencies is also required to graduate from the program to ensure that students have been prepared effectively by their coursework to meet the learning outcomes as demonstrated by the student's achievement of at least 75 percent of the learning outcomes in each

subject. As well, all students in the proposed online program must present a research project to peers and faculty via streaming video. Finally, all online students are required to physically come to Worsham College of Mortuary Science in Wheeling, Illinois, at least once during the program to demonstrate and verify to program faculty their clinical competencies in the Restorative Arts Lab.

Students will take courses in anatomy, chemistry, general psychology, finite math, computer applications, two semesters in English composition, microbiology/pathology, two semesters of embalming, small business management, funeral directing, marketing and merchandising for funeral service, business communication, accounting for business, cremation principles and practice, historical to contemporary funeral practices, psychology of death and dying, grief counseling and aftercare, business law, two semesters in restorative arts, and funeral service law and ethics. Graduates will be prepared to take the National Board Examination for licensure, as well as meet state-specific licensure requirements, and subsequently serve as funeral directors and or embalmers.

#### Assessment of Student Learning

Worsham College of Mortuary Science has established policies and best practices in place for the assessment of online student learning. The institution's approach incorporates direct and indirect measures administered periodically throughout the academic program. Direct assessment measures include: course-level learning assignments including quizzes, journal posts, and case studies; comprehensive qualifying examinations; student self-assessments; a research and writing project presented to peers and faculty; and the demonstration and verification of clinical competencies in the Restorative Arts Lab. Indirect assessments include: formal student evaluations of faculty and courses; student retention rates; graduation and time-to-completion rates; graduate exit surveys; employer and alumni surveys; and National Board Examination pass rates.

#### Program Assessment

The Worsham College of Mortuary Science has a clearly articulated assessment plan to determine the overall effectiveness of its programs and the degree to which students' needs are being met. The proposed Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science program developed its program outcomes based on the institution's mission, goals, and objectives, and on the accreditor's program assessment standards; course-level objectives and assessments are aligned with program outcomes. The Program Director will administer the program and provide the required documentation and data necessary during program review to demonstrate the program's strengths, areas for improvement, and plans for the future. Data sources will include: formal student evaluations of faculty and courses; student retention rates; graduation and time-to-completion rates; graduate exit surveys; employer and alumni surveys; and National Board Examination pass rates.

#### **Facilities (space, equipment, instructional materials)**

*1030.60(a)(5): The institution shall have adequate and suitable space, equipment and instructional materials to support institutional programs.*

Worsham College is located at 495 Northgate Parkway in Wheeling, Illinois. The main facility is set on two acres of land and provides approximately 20,000 square feet which include classrooms, computer and restorative art laboratories, library, group study space, casket selection room, burial vault and cremation display room, school store, lounges, office, and storage space.

The demonstration laboratory comes complete with an embalming table, instruments, embalming machine, embalming fluid, transfer cot, and a weighted mannequin. Other important features of this facility are the casket selection room and burial vault and cremation display. These rooms are used during several funeral directing courses and allow students hands-on experience with visual displays and include a meeting table and discrete camera to provide immediate feedback to the student after the mock arrangement conference.

The Cook County Medical Examiner's Office provides two autopsy suites which can accommodate four cases per suite for a total of eight cases during the students' embalming practical course. Students embalm cases at the Medical Examiner's Office under the direct supervision of Worsham faculty. The Medical Examiner's Office provides state-of-the-art equipment which the students can use as part of the College's agreement with the Office. The Medical Examiner's Office stratifies all state, federal, and local regulations.

The Tomczak-Bak Library is open to students during business hours. The library has several tables and a group study room. In the group study room, copiers, a television, and various anatomical and study guides are available. The library offers over 1,000 book titles, access to scholarly journals and other scholarly publications through online databases, magazines, newspapers, and trade publications. All computers in the computer lab have an electronic card catalog that is searchable by author, subject, and title.

### **Faculty and Staff**

*1030.60(a)(6): The education, experience and other qualifications of directors, administrators, supervisors and instructors shall ensure that the students will receive education consistent with the objectives of the program.*

Worsham College of Mortuary Science has established policies to ensure that faculty members possess the training, credentials, and other required qualifications to provide quality instructions to students. The Worsham College of Mortuary Science also has established policies to evaluate faculty and provide feedback on student learning outcomes.

### **Fiscal and Personnel Resources**

*1030.60(a)(8): Fiscal and personnel resources shall be sufficient to permit the institution to meet obligations to continuing programs while assuming additional resource responsibilities for the new certificate or degree program.*

The Worsham College of Mortuary Science has submitted five-year fiscal plans that show operational revenue will exceed expenditure from the first year of operation.

### **Accreditation/Licensure**

Worsham College of Mortuary Science is accredited as an institution by the American Board of Funeral Service Education (ABFSE), as is the existing AAS program. The proposed Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science has been designed to meet all of the ABFSE criteria for accreditation.

Funeral Directors and Embalmers are certified by ABFSE, which requires a passing grade on the National Board Exam by the International Conference of Funeral Service Examining Boards, and are licensed by a state licensing board. Graduation from an ABFSE accredited program is a

prerequisite of taking the National Board Exam. State licensure is required for practice in the field and varies by state. Worsham College of Mortuary Science provides sufficient resources, guidance, counseling, instruction, and professional connections for students to learn about state licensing requirements in any of the U.S. states the students wish to practice. Upon passing the proposed program and the National Board Examination, Illinois graduates will be prepared to seek Funeral Director and Embalmer licensure from the Illinois Department of Financial and Professional Regulation.

### **Program Information**

*1030.60(a)(7): The information the institution provides for students and the public shall accurately describe the programs offered, program objectives, length of program, schedule of tuition, fees, and all other charges and expenses necessary for completion of the course of study, cancellation and refund policies, and such other material facts concerning the institution and the program or course of instruction as are likely to affect the decision of the student to enroll. This information, including any enrollment agreements or similar agreements, shall be available to prospective students prior to enrollment.*

The Worsham College of Mortuary Science submitted detailed and adequate information on the institution's academic policies, tuition, fees, and refund policies, admissions procedures, and other relevant information necessary for prospective students to make informed decisions on enrollments.

### **Staff Conclusion**

The staff concludes that Worsham College of Mortuary Science and its proposed Associate of Science in Funeral Service Science meets the criteria in Sections 1030.30 and 1030.60 of the rules to implement The Private College Act (110 ILCS 1005) and The Academic Degree Act (110 ILCS 1010) and the Illinois Board of Higher Education policies pertaining to assessment and accreditation for licensure.